

AMHERST SCHOOLS

Fiscal Year 2013

AMHERST SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Katherine Appy, Chair	Rob Spence, Vice-Chair	Rick Hood, Secretary
Lawrence O'Brien	Amilcar Shabazz	

The Amherst School Committee is an elected body responsible for the public education of all children in kindergarten through grade six and of pre-school children with substantial special needs in our community. The Committee meets regularly on the third Tuesday of each month and welcomes citizen participation at each meeting. The members of this committee also serve as Amherst's members of the Regional School Committee which has responsibility for the educational programs for children in grades seven through twelve.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

The following demographic data is based on official enrollment numbers as of October 1, 2012.

	Crocker Farm	Fort River	Wildwood	District Totals
Preschool				
Total Enrollment	65	N/A	N/A	65
Special Education	33	N/A	N/A	33
ELE	0	N/A	N/A	0
Free/Reduced Lunch	29	N/A	N/A	29
Kindergarten				
Total Enrollment	36	53	60	149
Special Education	6	8	6	20
ELE	5	10	13	28
Free/Reduced Lunch	13	25	28	66
Grade One				
Total Enrollment	52	52	54	158
Special Education	9	10	8	27
ELE	10	15	9	34
Free/Reduced Lunch	20	25	26	71
Grade Two				
Total Enrollment	49	48	49	146
Special Education	12	13	8	33
ELE	7	10	11	28
Free/Reduced Lunch	25	24	21	70
Grade Three				
Total Enrollment	46	60	63	169
Special Education	7	15	14	36
ELE	5	8	6	19
Free/Reduced Lunch	11	23	26	60
Grade Four				
Total Enrollment	62	46	67	175
Special Education	15	11	16	42

ELE	10	6	9	25
Free/Reduced Lunch	28	14	25	67
Grade Five				
Total Enrollment	43	56	66	165
Special Education	10	13	16	39
ELE	6	7	2	15
Free/Reduced Lunch	14	17	28	59
Grade Six				
Total Enrollment	45	61	73	179
Special Education	7	15	16	38
ELE	6	6	3	15
Free/Reduced Lunch	13	25	22	60
TOTALS				
Total Enrollment	398	376	432	1206
Special Education	99 / 25%	85 / 23%	84 / 19%	268 / 22%
ELE	49 / 12%	62 / 17%	53 / 12%	164 / 14%
Free/Reduced Lunch	153 / 38%	153 / 41%	176 / 41%	482 / 40%

Fifty-four children from Amherst attended Charter Schools and 30 Amherst children attended other school districts under the School Choice program.

2012-2013 HIGHLIGHTS

The core mission of the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools is to “provide all students with a high quality education that enables them to be contributing members of a multiethnic, multicultural, pluralistic society.” This informs everything we do as educators, and during 2012-2013, a number of steps were taken toward that lofty goal:

- The Districts’ partnership with the University of Massachusetts, created in FY2011, moved forward with its intensive, systems-level work focusing on the instructional core. District-level and site-level instructional leadership teams are working in collaboration with teacher teams to examine student achievement and improve outcomes for students at all levels. Instructional Rounds, which provide a process for observation, data gathering, and analysis of instruction to inform district and school decision making, are now conducted routinely as a regular part of the building-level professional learning process.
- The district has formalized the use of the Response to Intervention (RTI) model for student support and intervention. Our implementation of a universal screening tool is moving the district forward in our data-based decision making efforts and provides teachers access to real-time student data to inform instruction, target intervention, and monitor progress. Significant progress has been made in implementing a tiered intervention program which provides multi-leveled instruction in our classrooms. We are making decisions with a higher level of knowledge about students than we were able to previously. In addition, a team of Central Office staff members have been trained in Harvard University’s Data Wis Program; they will be bringing this system to a wider audience in coming months.

- The School-Wide Positive Behavior System model is now a district-wide, proactive systems approach to improving social and academic competency for all students, and all schools are currently engaged in a three-year implementation process. For more information, please see *Voices from Our School* focused on PBIS.
- The district's strong partnership with Amherst College continues to grow and strengthen under the direction of Amherst College President, Dr. Biddy Martin. The college continued their funding for the district Volunteer Coordinator position held by Kimberly Stender, a portion of the salary of Dr. Rhonda Cohen, Director of Teaching and Learning, and expanded their support of the schools by providing \$10,000 for vouchers for the Out-of-School Time partnership.
- School safety has been enhanced significantly by implementation of the camera/buzzer entry system at all schools, new bus protocols for kindergarten students and the addition of comprehensive safety/emergency flip-charts as easy reference materials in each classroom. District personnel routinely review and update safety measures in partnership with community partners including the Amherst and Pelham Police and Fire Departments, the UMass Police Department, the Amherst College Police Department, the Massachusetts State Police, and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. Information on school safety procedures is available through *Voices from Our Schools: School Safety Special*.
- The districts once again partnered with families, friends, community members, and organizations to provide income-eligible students with backpacks filled with school supplies for the start of this school year. More than 300 backpacks were distributed.
- The district welcomed Dr. Faye Brady, Director of Student Services, who began her work in the district in July 2012. Dr. Brady brings extensive experience and expertise to this role through her work in New Jersey.]

Initiatives in 2013-2014

Some of the highlights of challenges and focus in FY14 will include:

- To continue the process of exploring, and potentially implementing, a new educational governance structure based on recommendations by the RSDPB.
- To fully implement any recommended changes to the schedule/use of time that may result from the current research and conversations around this issue.
- To continue to provide mandated professional development and district/school professional development in a cohesive, embedded manner to support the growth of staff, while minimizing the amount of time out of the classroom.
- To continue to implement recommendations specific to identified barriers and community needs to ensure that all students benefit from programs and services.
- To continue to strengthen and expand methods of community engagement with students, staff, families and community.
- To continue efforts to strengthen, expand, and seek out new partnerships and collaborative initiatives to support our schools.

AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL SCHOOLS

Fiscal Year 2013

AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Amherst Representatives

Katherine Appy
Rick Hood
Lawrence O'Brien, Vice-Chair
Amilcar Shabazz
Rob Spence (until 2013 election)
Kathleen Traphagen (elected 2013)

Leverett Representative

Kip Fonsh, Chair

Pelham Representatives

Debbie Gould
Trevor Baptiste

Shutesbury Representative

Michael DeChiara

The Regional School Committee represents the four communities that comprise the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District: Amherst, Leverett, Pelham, and Shutesbury. It is responsible for the direction and support of the educational programs for students in Grades 7 through 12 from each of these towns. Committee meetings are open to the public, except for executive sessions as prescribed by law, and are held regularly on the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of each month. Opportunity is available at every meeting for public participation.

STUDENTS

The following demographic data is based on official enrollment numbers as of October 1, 2012.

	Middle School	High School	District Totals
Grade 7			
Total Enrollment	236	N/A	236
Special Education	53	N/A	53
ELE	12	N/A	12
Free/Reduced Lunch	67	N/A	67
Grade 8			
Total Enrollment	238	N/A	238
Special Education	44	N/A	44
ELE	9	N/A	9
Free/Reduced Lunch	68	N/A	68
Grade 9			
Total Enrollment	N/A	261	261
Special Education	N/A	70	70
ELE	N/A	9	9
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	78	78
Grade 10			
Total Enrollment	N/A	259	259
Special Education	N/A	50	50
ELE	N/A	14	14
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	70	70
Grade 11			
Total Enrollment	N/A	250	250
Special Education	N/A	44	44
ELE	N/A	7	7
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	64	64

Grade 12

Total Enrollment	N/A	283	283
Special Education	N/A	59	59
ELE	N/A	3	3
Free/Reduced Lunch	N/A	60	60

TOTALS

Total Enrollment	474	1053	1527
Special Education	97 / 21%	223 / 21%	320 / 21%
ELE	21 / 04%	33 / 03%	54 / 04%
Free/Reduced Lunch	135 / 29%	272 / 26%	407 / 27%

Enrollments on October 1 over the last ten years were as follows:

2003-2004—2,043	2008-2009—1,764
2004-2005—1,949	2009-2010—1,691
2005-2006—1,924	2010-2011—1,592
2006-2007—1,877	2011-2012—1,546
2007-2008—1,817	2012-2013—1,527

In addition, 38 Regional students were enrolled in Vocational Schools as of October 1, 2012. Twenty-one students attended other school districts under the state's School Choice Program, and 67 students were enrolled at charter schools. Tuition for district students to attend these schools is paid by the Regional School District.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2012-2013

The core mission of the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools is to “provide all students with a high quality education that enables them to be contributing members of a multiethnic, multicultural, pluralistic society.” This informs everything we do as educators, and during Fiscal Year 2013, we have continued to move toward our district-wide long-term goals. To see the plan that guides our work, read *District Improvement Plan: A Blueprint for Continuous Growth*.

- The Districts’ partnership with the University of Massachusetts, created in FY2011, moved forward with its intensive, systems-level work focusing on the instructional core. District-level and site-level instructional leadership teams are working in collaboration with teacher teams to examine student achievement and improve outcomes for students at all levels. Instructional Rounds, which provide a process for observation, data gathering, and analysis of instruction to inform district and school decision making, are now conducted routinely as a regular part of the building-level professional learning process.
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program which provides multi-leveled instruction in our classrooms. We made decisions with a higher level of knowledge about students than we were able to previously. In addition, a team of Central Office staff members have been trained in Harvard University's Data Wis Program; they will be bringing this system to a wider audience in coming months.

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INITIATIVES IN 2012-2013

- Each of the four towns in the Regional School District appointed members to the Regional School District Planning Board to continue more in-depth research on the impact of various educational regionalization scenarios for their communities.
- Our district is comprised of five union groups, four of which have contracts that are being renegotiated in 2013. These groups are as follows: teachers, clerical/media staff, and paraprofessionals which are represented by the Amherst-Pelham Education Association; and assistant principals and district administrators, which are represented by the Amherst-Pelham Administrators Association. Custodial/maintenance staff members are represented by AFSCME/AFL-CIO and they resolved their union contracts prior to the start of FY13.

- The districts are doing extensive work around the issue of time on learning and school schedules. Currently, the schedules for the elementary day have been audited, the School Committee's request by the New England School Development Council and are under discussion.
- The districts are implementing the State mandated Educator Evaluation Model for teachers and administrators under the direction of Michael Morris, Director of Educator Evaluation and Assessment Analysis. All staff and administrators were trained before the start of the school year in the new processes and procedures. Leadership work has been focused on improving the level of feedback that educators receive on their practice to enhance our cycle of inquiry and learning for adults working in the district. More information about the new MA Model for Educator Evaluation can be seen in the recent *Voices from Our School* episode. The Model has a multi-year role-out, with new elements (such as student surveys and multiple measures of student achievement) to be implemented for the next three years.
- Dr. Cohen is leading the district in curriculum evaluation, K-12 curriculum alignment and alignment to the Common Core Standards. In 2013, Mathematics was the major area of focus. For a full update on this work, see Teaching and Learning Update: K-12 Curriculum Alignmen.
- Dr. Guevara is leading district efforts to assess and improve the work pertaining to family and community engagement with a team comprised of community five-college partners, a school committee member and principals. This team is also leading the work to eliminate barriers to academic success for all students.
- Dr. Guevara is also leading the work toward achieving the "Vision for the After-school Programs" recommended by Superintendent Geryk for the three elementary schools. During the first half of the year, work has focused on having one program at each school, aligning programming practices and increasing program availability to income-eligible students. A program inspired by Brookline's "Steps to Success" will be developed for the district.
- The Amherst, Pelham, and Amherst Pelham Regional Schools are currently engaged in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Coordinated Program Review process. This process involves procedural compliance audits of Special Education, English Learner Education, Civil Rights (MOA), and Title I. Please see the District Improvement Plan for full goal information.